



## From the Commissioner

Since the founding of our Republic, the U.S. Customs Service has been a trusted partner in America's prosperity and security. Yet conditions at the new millennium promise to test our abilities as never before. As everyone who deals internationally knows, we are in the midst of a booming era of global trade. The surge in imports and exports will nearly double Customs workload in the next 5 years alone. While this growth presents unprecedented opportunities for our world economy, it also offers profound challenges for Customs mission to facilitate and enforce.

As Commissioner, I am responsible for the overall management, direction, and performance of the Customs Service. I am proud to present this FY 1999 Accountability Report. As a fact-based scorecard of our operational and financial performance, the Accountability Report charts our annual accomplishments and lays the foundation for future improvements.

1999 was a year of momentous change for Customs. Heavy emphasis was given to internal reforms as a first step in preparing the agency for the challenges that lie ahead. These changes were felt throughout Customs, and included the restructuring of the Office of Internal Affairs to bolster integrity; the creation of a new system of discipline for employees; the establishment of new accountability standards; and the design of new uniforms and official vehicle markings to strengthen pride and professionalism.



Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly

Customs was also hard at work on a new automated system that will revolutionize the way the nation's trade is processed. Successful prototypes were tested that incorporate the modern technology envisioned for the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE). However, until Customs is provided sufficient funding, these prototypes will be concluded and we will not be able to replace Customs current, outdated automated system. Modernization must remain a top priority as we strive to fund, construct, and implement ACE in the next few years.

Our enforcement successes will be closely bound to our progress on new automation. Timely, accurate information will be indispensable in helping us to sift out the small percentage of dangerous or illegal goods passing through U.S. borders. The most dangerous and prevalent of these continues to be illegal narcotics. Drug smuggling shows little sign of abating; in fact, the quantity of Customs overall seizures of illegal narcotics was up 17.5 percent in FY 1999. This was largely the result of important strategic planning and operational successes, as well as outstanding coordination between Customs and its partner border enforcement agencies.

The past year also brought a reminder of an all-too-real scenario threatening our borders; the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction by international terrorists bent on targeting America. The courageous actions of Customs inspectors along our northern borders in December 1999 prevented a potential deadly terrorist conspiracy and highlighted the need for added vigilance along our frontiers. Customs will continue to seek and deploy the resources necessary to deter this threat.

For 210 years, Customs has stood as America's frontline. But perhaps at no other time in our long history have the challenges before us been greater than they are now. America will rely more than ever on the nation's oldest law enforcement agency to protect and defend its economy, its citizens, and its communities. As in the past, Customs stands ready with creative solutions that facilitate trade while upholding our obligations under the law.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond W. Kelly".